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SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SCHOOL LUNCH

Quarter of a Century of Lunches for Kids. On June 4, 1971, the National School Lunch Program will be 25 years old -- and that's a lot of noons. Throughout 1971, teachers across the nation will make their students more aware of what a good school lunch can do for them. To increase participation in the School Lunch Program, as well as to increase personal interest in improving child nutrition, joint Federal, State, and local efforts will continue through the summer and early fall -- including the special observance of National School Lunch Week, October 10-16. Currently, more than 24 million children are served school lunches daily. Of these, 6.8 million needy children get their lunches at free or reduced-prices. School lunches are served in more than 79,000 schools but not every school in the U.S. has a lunch program and not all children who could benefit from school lunches are getting them. Community organizations can join in or start activities to improve child nutrition (such as starting a school food service with help from USDA). Volunteer efforts are welcomed. For information, write School Lunch Program, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

LUNCH BY COMPUTER

School Lunch Goes CAMP. Next year school children in Miami, Fla. and Memphis, Tenn., will be eating lunches planned by CAMP. CAMP -- meaning computer assisted menu planning -- will operate during the 1971-72 school year in the school lunch programs of these cities as a pilot project of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. CAMP involves the building of a computer tape of numerous recipes and variations that meet accepted meal requirements. The recipes will be costed out and measured in terms of nutritive value. Local school systems making use of such a tape will be able, via computer, to select the least cost menu that meets nutritional and taste requirements. The CAMP approach is expected to reduce overall food costs and to give greater assurance of meeting nutritional needs in school lunches.



BUGS THAT LOVE PEOPLE

The Feeling Is Not Mutual. In the numerically overwhelming world of bugs, three of the pests stand out as being particularly fond of people and their possessions. There are the cockroaches which like people so well they will stay around the house all year; there are the moths which are delirious about people's woolen clothes especially when stored for the summer; and then there are the mosquitoes which like people just for themselves. If you are burdened with these one-sided friendships, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has developed some booklets which can help you break them up:

"Protecting Woolens Against Clothes Moths and Carpet Beetles" (G-113) 20 cents

"Cockroaches: How To Control Them" (Leaflet 430) 10 cents

"Controlling Mosquitoes in Your Home and On Your Premises" (G-84) 10 cents

Copies of the bulletins may be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

Shopping Tool. If you're the kind of food shopper who carefully reads labels and tries to get the best value for your money and menu, you'll likely want a copy of "Standards for Meat and Poultry Products--A Consumer Reference List" (C&MS-85). It lists, among other things, the amount of meat or poultry that U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors require, as a minimum, in more than 150 federally inspected products -- from that old favorite, "Beef Stew" (at least 25% cooked meat), to "Chicken Chow Mein" (at least 4% cooked poultry meat). For a copy of the list write: Information Division, Consumer and Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250, including the title and number, and, of course, your name and address.

USDA WEINER WATCHERS

Weiners Getting Leaner. Hot dogs and bologna lost some of their fat during 1970 as the U.S. Department of Agriculture implemented a 30 percent fat limit on cooked sausage products. This limit, effective October 1969, resulted after public hearings into a possible fat limit. Many voices were heard--consumer groups and industry alike. By the last quarter of 1970, fat content of analyzed samples averaged 27.8 percent. Surveys showed that before October 1969, cooked sausages averaged 33 percent fat, with some approaching the 50 percent mark. Fat content is now carefully monitored by USDA inspectors, along with their other duties to see that these and other meat products are wholesome, processed under sanitary conditions, and accurately labeled.

MAY PLENTIFUL FOODS

Eggs Head the List. You can hardly find a food that has so many good qualities as eggs, a featured item on the May Plentiful Foods List. First, there's the neat and handy package that nature wraps them in for storage. Then eggs are so versatile -- serve them as a dish or combine them with other foods. Nutritious? They contain significant amounts of vitamin A, iron, riboflavin (vitamin B₂) and protein so near perfection that often scientists use egg protein as a standard to measure protein in other foods. Other foods included on the May list are potatoes and potato products, canned ripe olives, milk and dairy products, canned cling peaches, and turkeys. For June, Plentiful Foods will include milk and dairy products, broiler-fryers, eggs, dried peas, canned ripe olives, and potatoes and potato products.

BUILD OUR AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

BOAC. Training the leadership to make rural communities attractive to people is the purpose of the Building Our American Communities program. It is a cooperative effort involving the Future Farmers of America and USDA's Farmers Home Administration. Introduced last year and given top priority nationally it is being rapidly integrated in the vocational agriculture course of study in high schools and the FFA program of work. BOAC is available to other youth organizations -- girls, boys and young adults -- in addition to the 8200 chapters and 450,000 members of FFA. Write for information to BOAC, Farmers Home Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 388-6150.

PLAY IT SAFE

Take These Tips. Whether hiking 2,404 miles on the Pacific Crest Trail or merely going on a one-day outing to the woods, there's one very important thing to remember: Safety in the outdoors. Many of today's Americans who can navigate an urban freeway with ease are at a complete loss when confronted with a forest trail. And their lack of knowledge about the great outdoors can sometimes be a matter of life or death. To help them prepare for their outdoor trip -- and survive when they get there -- USDA's Forest Service has revised its popular publication, "Outdoor Safety Tips," (PA 887). Just the right size to fit in your pocket, it contains such information as how to prepare for your trip; what to do if you get lost; how to signal for help; and first aid tips. Copies of the booklet are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 for 15 cents. Get a copy and take it with you!

NEW SYMBOL

It Marks the Trail. A new trail symbol will "blaze" the Pacific Crest Trail, the 2,404-mile hiking trail which winds down the West Coast from Canada to Mexico, passing through Washington, Oregon, and California on the way. The triangular symbol will be used on markers to identify the trail route for hikers. In the center of the symbol a black conifer and white mountain range are superimposed on a blue-green background. The words "Pacific Crest Trail" are printed around the outside in a white border. The Trail, which passes through 23 National Forest, 12 National Wildernesses, 7 National Parks, and numerous State Parks, is under the administration of the Secretary of Agriculture. It is one of two National Scenic Trails established under the National Scenic Trail Act of 1968. The other is the 2,000-mile Appalachian Trail in the East which extends from Maine to Georgia.

AT HOME AND AWAY

Allow More For Eating Out. . . . if your budget includes regular outlays for bought meals. As usual, food prices at work, school, restaurants, and snack bars are going up more rapidly than prices at grocery stores. The tab for away-from-home eating could average 5-6 percent higher for the year than in 1970.

TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGING

And So Are Milk Habits. Consumers ate more cheese and drank more low-fat milk last year, despite higher prices for these products. But consumption declined for butter and whole milk. These changes are likely to continue during 1971.

OLD WEST FLAVOR

Jerky Is Making A Comeback. In their journals, explorers Lewis and Clark wrote about "jerky" -- a dried, sliced meat. It was popular among men in their expedition, as it was with the Indians and later with pioneers and prospectors who made the westward trek. Today, jerky is making a comeback as a chewy, tasty, nutritious snack food sold in foodstores across the country and by mail order. U.S. Department of Agriculture inspection of sanitation and processing, as for all meat products shipped interstate, helps provide "from hoof to package" assurance that jerky is wholesome and truthfully labeled. The product is sliced from lean beef, spiced, and either air-dried, oven-dried, or smoked. (A buying tip: "Sectioned and formed" on the label means the jerky was made from large chunks of beef, appropriately spiced, and molded and formed before being cut into strips and dried). With advanced processing techniques, jerky now can be made within 24 hours, instead of the 2 to 3 months it took for natural curing when the pioneers and Indians made it. Since it needs no refrigeration, it's great to take along on hiking and camping trips.

IN THE GOOD OLD SUMMERTIME

Wholesome Food and Fun. Old summertime will be very good indeed for many needy children taking part in community recreation programs. Not only will the children have fun under the sun, but also they can look forward to nutritious meals -- if their communities are participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Special Food Service Program. The food program, which is operated in cooperation with local nonprofit educational and recreational programs, is designed to reach needy children who take part in summer activities sponsored by cities or various civic groups. Here is where the youngsters can receive a part of their daily nutritional requirements for good health -- along with summer fun. No matter which way a community decides to sponsor the Special Food Service Program -- through a municipal recreation department, a school district, church or service groups -- USDA's Food and Nutrition Service can provide help with both money for food and federally-donated foods. Many communities are starting now to set up their summer programs. Additional information on the Special Food Service Program is available from the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

KNOW YOUR LAWN SEED

Or There'll Be No Grass Coming Thru The Rye. What may appear to be the best buy in lawn seed could well result in a poor lawn or an exercise in futility. For instance, annual ryegrass dies out after the first year. In mixture of different kinds of grass seed, annual ryegrass can be very useful, however. It comes up quickly, giving the more slowly growing grasses a temporary protective covering until they mature. And it can be a quick temporary cover to prevent soil erosion. Even perennial ryegrass, which lives about 3 years when planted alone, won't give you a permanent lawn. According to USDA seed experts, the trick in buying lawn seed is to read the label and learn something about the characteristics of different kinds of grasses. A USDA leaflet, "How To Buy Lawn Seed," (G-169) can help you be a wise buyer. For single free copies write to the Office of Information, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Lillie Vincent, Editor of Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Information, Washington, D.C. 20250. Please include your zipcode.